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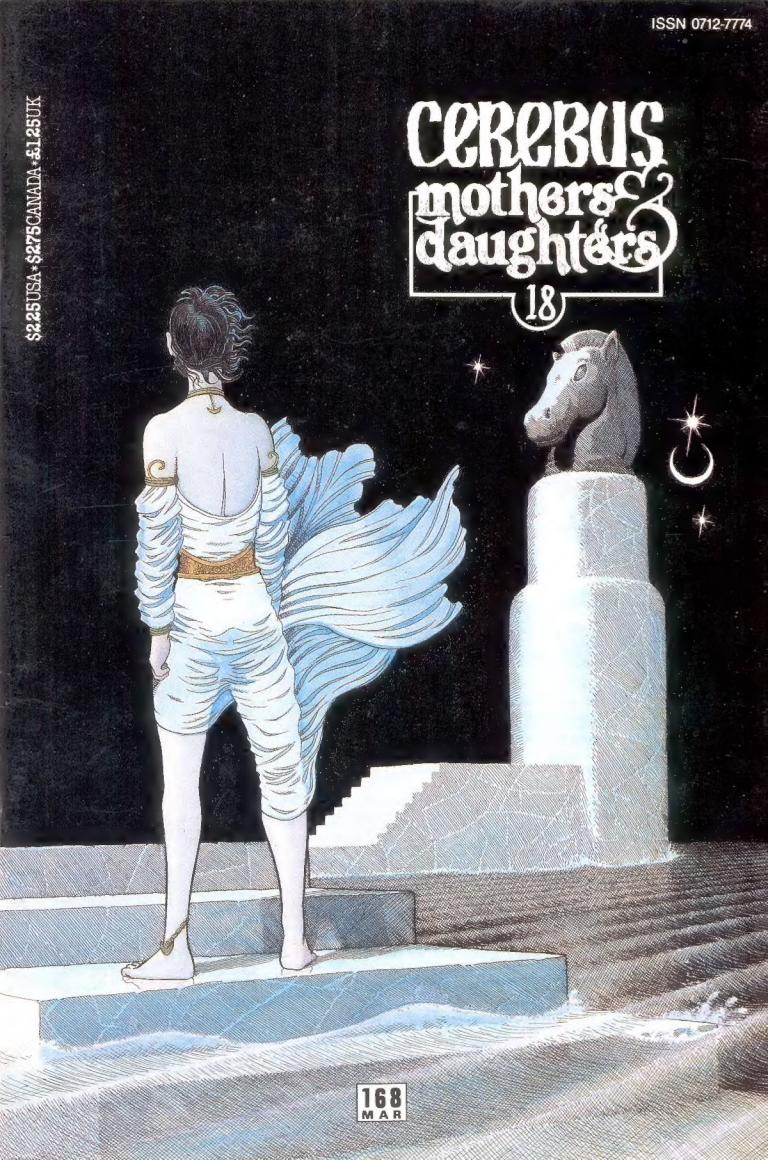
CEREBUS
mothers & daughters
18



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MAR

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

As you can well imagine, I get a lot of mail asking me about self-publishing. It's also the most common request at signings and conventions. Martin Wagner was going to publish a comic book about self-publishing and a lot of us were helping him with it, but there just wasn't a large enough demand or interest at the distributor and retail level to even get a first printing out there so it sort of died on the vine (which really isn't such a bad thing. Martin's a lot better off devoting himself to *Hepcats*, right?).

So, I've decided, what the hell. I'll use this space to discuss self-publishing from a practical stand-point and just rattle on until I figure that I've covered all the bases right from square one and when I'm all done I'll stop. Hopefully sometime before issue 300.

★★★★★★★★★★

When young cartoonists ask me how to self-publish, I always liken it to a golf fan going up to Lee Trevino and asking 'How do I become a professional golfer?' The answer of course is a question. 'Do you have a set of golf clubs?' Here, let me write that down. Buy a set of golf clubs. And then a second question 'Have you ever played golf?' Okay, that's good. Let me write that down, too. Play some golf. Do you understand? Writing and drawing comic books is like anything else. You have to apply yourself and you have to do it. Assuming I wanted to be Eric Clapton when I grow up (or at least when I'm older), it makes a great deal of sense for me to buy a guitar and take some lessons before I write and ask him how to become like him. You first have to find out if you have the aptitude for what you're attempting to do. Now, the only way that you are going to discover that is to sit down and try to do it. The guideline I always use is A Page a Day. If you can't comfortably do a finished comic book page (written, pencilled, inked, lettered and toned) in a single day, you are facing trouble before you get very far along. Assuming that you are going to draw a comic book every month and making allowances for the way that life intrudes despite the best of creative intentions, a page a day is mandatory if you're going to stay on your monthly schedule. If it takes you two or three days to do a page, the best that you're going to manage is bi-monthly and if two or three days is the best you can manage and most of the time it takes you four or five days, then you are looking at quarterly as the maximum frequency. When you consider that the average black and white comic book is going to sell two or three thousand copies and the profits from that are going to be around two or three hundred dollars, that gives you a total income of seventy-five dollars a month for all of your living expenses. Even the most widely-known and well-thought of black and whites are selling in the low ten to twelve thousand range. It is not a get-rich quick scheme. The first five years that I did Cerebus I could have made more money baby-sitting (that isn't a joke). Five years. Think about it.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

★★★★★★★★★★

The most common mistake of the starting cartoonist who wants to self-publish is to ask questions about things that are two or three years down the line. How do I copyright my character? How do I find a printer? How do I solicit the distributors? How much should I advertise? What you are doing is asking Lee Trevino (having already established that you don't even own a set of golf clubs) what the best airline is to travel from tournament to tournament; how much caddies get paid; what sort of wood to use on the fifth hole at whatever course.

Go to the bank, take out some money, and buy yourself a clue.

★★★★★★★★★★

Let's start with the golf clubs.

You have to find out what is right for you. The art paper should be proportional to the image size. A comic book PRINTED page is 6X9. We draw Cerebus on 11-1/2X17-1/2 boards. The image size of the originals is 10X15 (PRO SECRET #1; I use a sheet of Letratone which is 10X15 to rule up the page. I position it on the art board, mark the corners and then connect them using a ruler and a blue pencil so that I don't have to fuck around with t-squares and shit like that). There is an infinite number of dimensions proportional to 6X9. You can draw the pages 3X4-1/2 and have them enlarged. It'll be pretty easy to fill the page, but you sure won't get much detail and all of your mistakes will be magnified 200%. You can draw the page six feet by nine feet. It'll take you forever to fill the page, any detail you put in will fill in during the reproduction stage and the lettering will probably vanish altogether. Something in between. There are a hundred different kinds of art paper and illustration board (I remember Bernie Wrightson telling me in 1974 that he used to use DC's paper to draw on until he realized he was blowing his nose on better quality paper. Having occasionally had to ink a piece of art on Big Two art paper, I know what he means). Buy a variety of art boards and papers. Most art stores are happy to cut them to size for a small charge. Try a variety of sizes. For Cerebus we use an illustration board (S-172 Bainbridge) that is like a sheet of plate steel. Everything sits on the surface. Pencils do not penetrate the surface. A pen nib will (Hunt 102) but it takes a fair bit of pressure. The problem I have with Big Two art paper is that it is very fibrous. If you put any pressure on the pen nib to thicken the line, the point gets clogged with fibres and the ink has a tendency to bleed into the scar on either

CONTINUED ON PAGE 1 OF AARDVARK COMMENT

CEREBUS

NO. 168 **MARCH 1993**

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 188)

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 189 to Cerebus 200)

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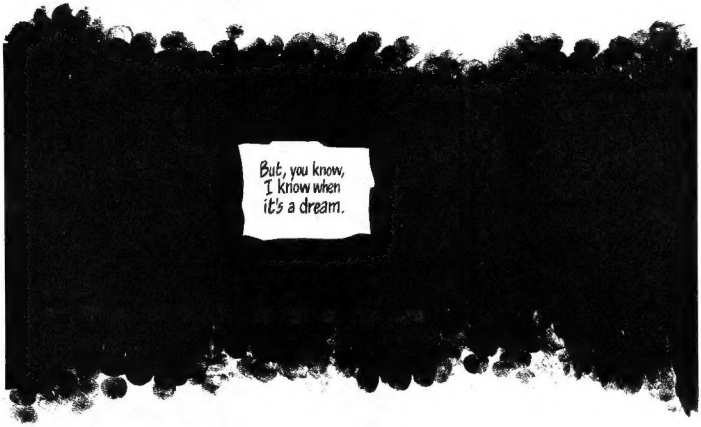
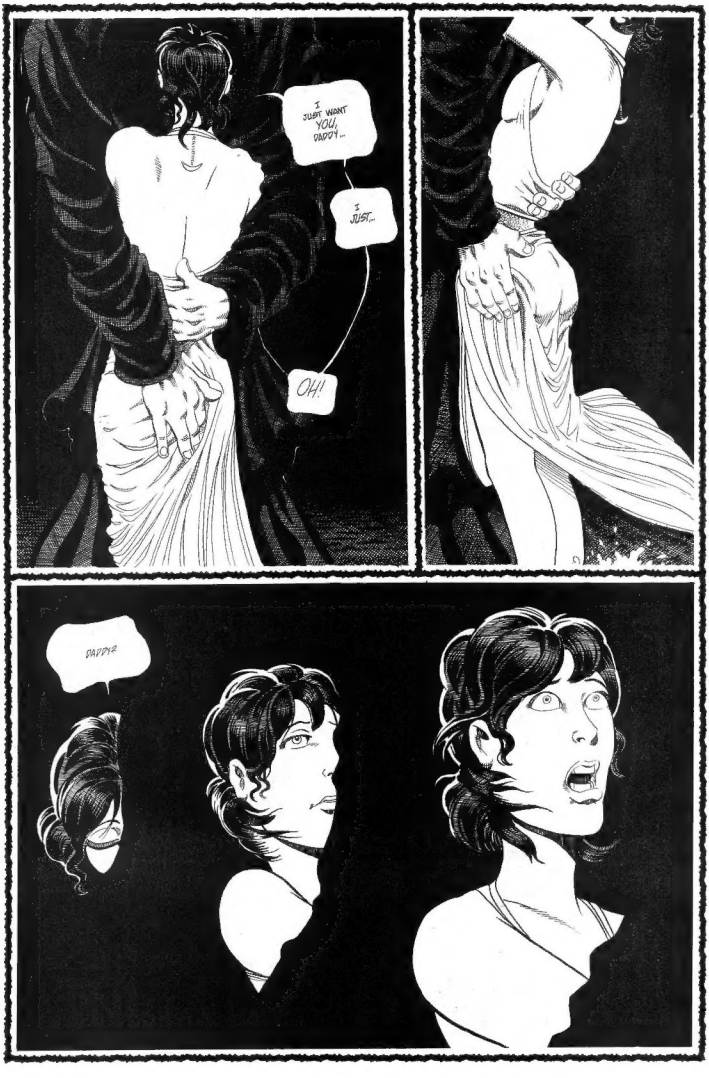

But, you know,
I know when
it's a dream.

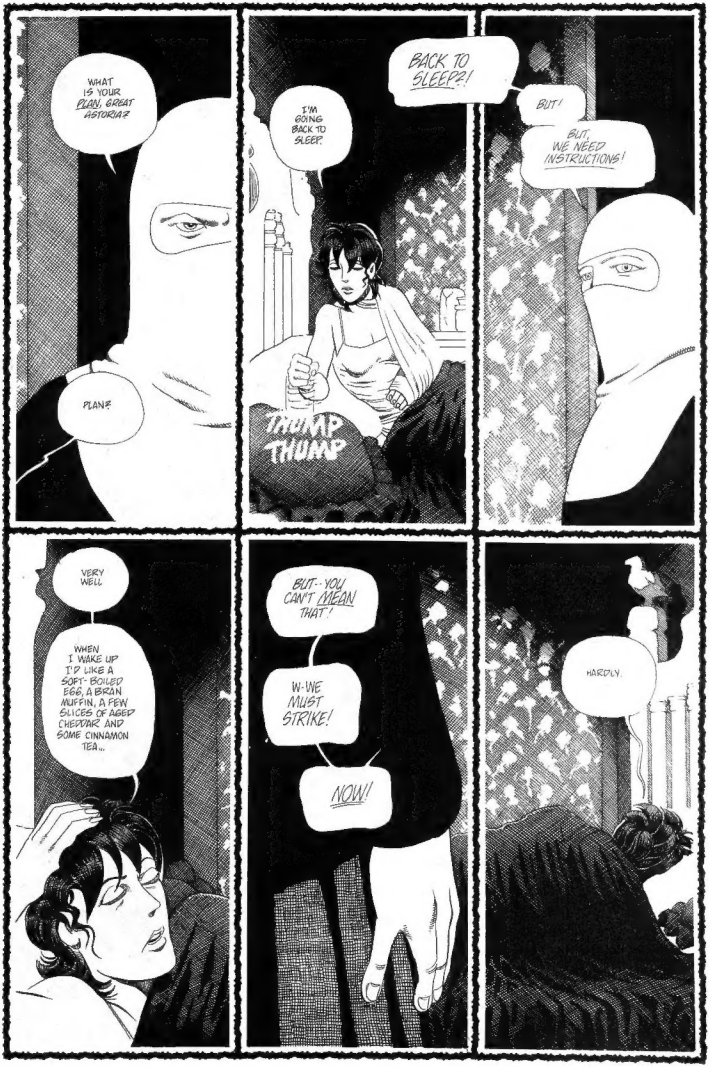
PRINCESS?
D-DADDY?
DADDY!
OH DADDY... I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!
YOUR MOTHER IS HERE, TOO, ASTORIA...
NO!!
SEND HER AWAY!
I DON'T WANT MUMMY HERE


I JUST WANT YOU, DADDY...
I JUST...
OH!
DADDY?

ARTEMIS!
CHUD
WHAT IN THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
Well--
I
uh
ANSWER ME!
COME BACK HERE
YOU...
YOU...
POIT!

REGENERATE
AH!
YOU'RE AWAKE.
GREAT ASTORIA.
WE AWAIT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS
OH GOOD
I MANAGED TO WAKE UP ON THE RIGHT TEAM.
WHO'S WINNING?
WE HAVE MANY UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF CIRIN'S DEATH
THE CIRINISTS, AS A RESULT, ARE IN COMPLETE DISARRAY

OH, REALLY.
AND WHAT-- THEORETICALLY-- DID SHE DIE OF.
A LARGE SPIRE GREW ON THE MOUNTAIN
WHEN IT BROKE OFF AND FELL OVER...
IT CRUSHED THE REGENCY HOTEL...
THE UPPER CITY...
CURIOUS.
HOW SECURE ARE WE HERE?
WE HAVE HEAVILY-ARMED GUARDS STATIONED AT EVERY ENTRANCE... THE CIRIN LOYALISTS ARE KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE...
THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS AND CURIOSITY-SEEKERS MILLING AROUND THE GROUNDS...
NOTHING WE CAN'T HANDLE
TO BE HONEST, EVERYONE IS JUST ...STUNNED. WOULD BE THE BEST WORD FOR IT...
JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS... WAITING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...
I'LL BET.

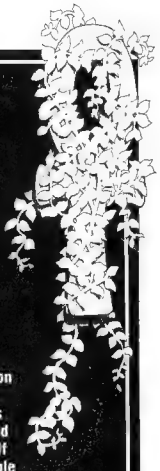

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN, GREAT ASTORIA?
PLAN?
I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP.
THUMP THUMP
BACK TO SLEEP?!
BUT!
BUT, WE NEED INSTRUCTIONS!
VERY WELL
WHEN I WAKE UP I'D LIKE A SOFT-BOILED EGG, A BRAN MUFFIN, A FEW SLICES OF AGED CHEDDAR AND SOME CINNAMON TEA...
BUT- YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT!
W-WE MUST STRIKE!
NOW!
HARDLY.

IF CIRIN IS ALIVE, ALL OF YOU ARE GOING TO BE DEAD THE MOMENT SHE DECIDES TO SEND A LEGION OR TWO TO GET ME FOR OUR LITTLE CHAT...
IF CIRIN IS DEAD, THEN I'M RUNNING THE SHOW AND I DON'T WANT TO START THAT WITHOUT A FEW MORE HOURS OF SLEEP AND SOME BREAKFAST...
BUT...
WHAT SHOULD ME DO IN THE MEANTIME?
MOVE TO THE OTHER END OF THE HALL OR TALK IN WHISPERS.
IT WAS YOUR CHATTERING THAT WOKE ME UP...
I...
I...
YES, GREAT ASTORIA...

SO THEN, CEREBUS DOVE BACK INSIDE THE TOWER WHERE THE BIG MAN AND WOMAN APOCALYPSE BEAST COULDN'T GET HIM!
AND THE TOWER WAS STILL GETTING TALLER AND TALLER, BUT IT WAS ALSO GETTING NARROWER AND NARROWER, SEE?
SO THEN CEREBUS CAN HEAR THE TOWER STARTING TO MAKE THIS CRACKING NOISE AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT
Y'KNOW--AH HED ME A DREAM JEST LAK THET ONCE..
THAR WUZ THIS BIG OL' HAIRY BLUE DANG..
IT WASN'T A DREAM, YOU MORON!
CEREBUS ASCENDED INTO VANAHEIM!
I THUT Y'L SET Y'L ENTET UN THE YALLUH..
YEAH THET'S RAIGHT
THET'S WHUT YUH SED

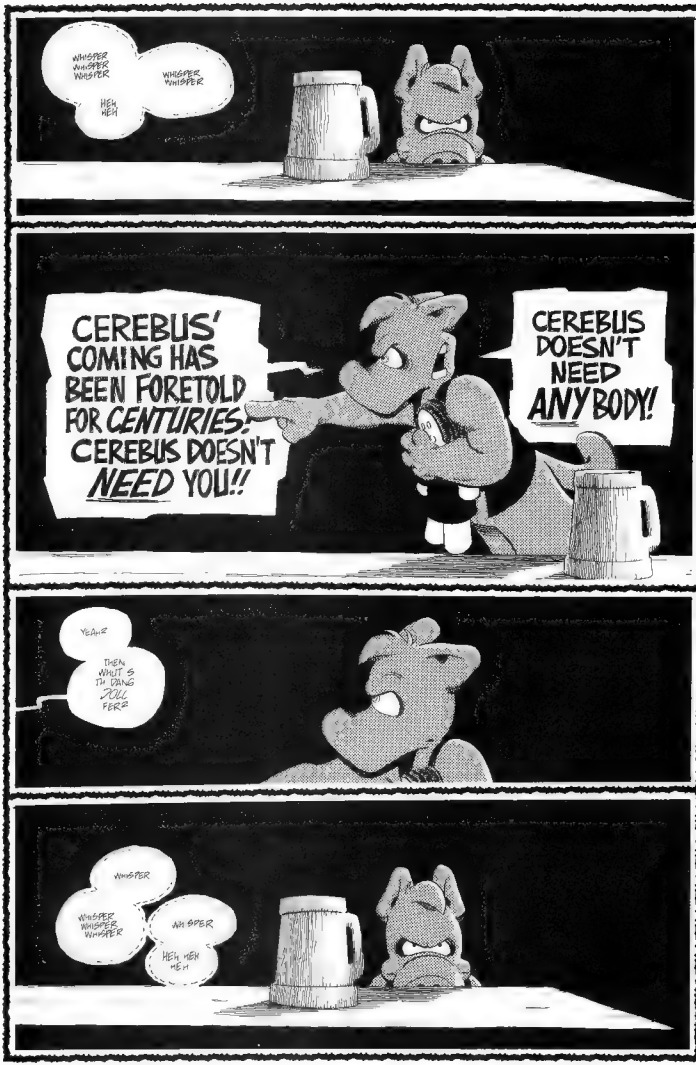
On the subject of dreams, most particularly, the matriarchists reveal themselves to be dictatorial and uncompromising. From a very early age, they train their daughters to regard all of existence as real and tangible; that any transgression awake or asleep is to be regarded as equally suspect and as a punishable offence. Naturally enough, there is no way to control people's dreams, but their vehemence on the subject has caused more than one small child to regard herself as depraved, evil and unworthy through having dreamt herself in a circumstance which does not meet with matriarchal approval. Dreamers, awake and asleep, have been responsible for most, if not all, of the great developments in all areas of human endeavour. Small wonder that, apart from inventing itself, the matriarchy is barren of anything that could (even by the most charitable) be described as an idea; and further that they are always in the forefront of those who seek to oppress, inhibit and eradicate new thought. Until, of course, that new thought proves itself beneficial to their society, whereupon they embrace it whole-heartedly and strike all reference to their original opposition from any written record.

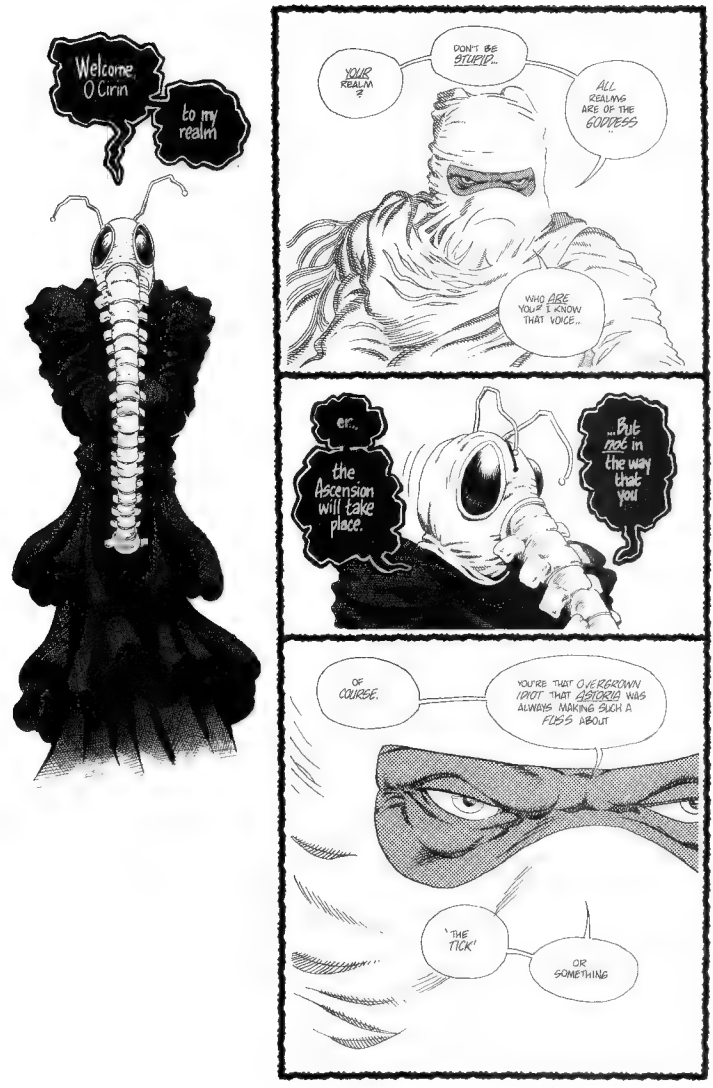
Astoria
Kevillist Origins



It is most important to have a thorough-going discussion with your daughters each morning on the subject of their dreams. For it is in dreams that depravity and wickedness find their surest hand-hold. The morning discussion should begin as soon as the child is capable of expressing herself so that she can learn as soon and as completely as possible what constitutes a Good Dream and what constitutes a Bad Dream. Great care should be exercised in making the child aware that dreams are inside their own heads and do not originate elsewhere. Once advised that Bad Dreams represent inner poison which must be dealt with and eliminated by the child herself, she will soon embark on a fit and proper course of self-awareness, self-preservation and self-development. If a daughter is made to confront the demon within, she will have little difficult distinguishing the demon without.

Cirin
The New Matriarchy


WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
HEH HEH
CEREBUS' COMING HAS BEEN FORETOLD FOR CENTURIES. CEREBUS DOESN'T NEED YOU!!
CEREBUS DOESN'T NEED ANYBODY!
YEAH
THEN WHUT S TH DANG ZOL FER?
WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER
HEH HEH HEH


Welcome, O Cirin
to my realm
DON'T BE STUPID...
YOUR REALM?
ALL REALMS ARE OF THE GODDESS...
WHO ARE YOU? I KNOW THAT VOICE...
er...
the Ascension will take place.
...But not in the way that you
OF COURSE.
YOU'RE THAT OVERGROWN IDIOT THAT ASTORIA WAS ALWAYS MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT
'THE TICK'
OR SOMETHING

er... Roach actually
but I am Roach... nevermore
Now. I am...
WHAT IS THAT RIDICULOUS CONTRAPTION?
um. The Ascension draws near.. It will take place after the
I ASKED YOU A QUESTION
WHAT IS THAT DAMN FOOL THING ON YOUR HEAD?
uh.. It is the Sacred Helmet of $WOON, my ancient and...
IT'S ALL WHITE AND ENCRUSTED ON THE END...
YOU FILTHY LITTLE BOY

Uh
There will be a great
WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER SAY?
HMM?
a great Trial, at which
ANSWER ME
YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR MOTHER WOULD SAY...
DON'T YOU.
POIT!
GET BACK HERE

General Greer:
We have to face facts. Any time we try to announce anything or reassure the public, it just starts another cacophony. We have loyal supporters who have secured the grounds of the Papal Residence. Astoria's supporters have secured a small hotel at the edge of the disaster site. Astoria hasn't said . . .

General Dworkin:
I say we just storm the damn hotel and execute her.

General Greer:
You keep saying that, and I keep trying to explain to you that no one is listening to us. They all know when it's Cirin in their heads, but they don't know us from Eve. No one is going to launch an attack with a hundred different voices saying they're us and telling them to do a hundred different things. We've . . .

General Steinem:
I think you're missing the point, whether anyone listens to us or not. We don't know what Cirin wants us to do. Her last command was to bring Astoria to her for questioning. If Astoria dies in an assault we can't magically bring her back to life and if we bring her in alive . . . what are we going to do? Bring her in here and tell her to wait for Cirin to regain consciousness? She'll just declare herself the new Cirin and who can say which way that will go? She still has a good case for being the Western Pontiff. You bring her into the heart of the Eastern Church and you might as well have united the two . . .

General Dworkin:
Who said anything about bringing her in here? We take her to a cell and hold her until Cirin comes to.

General Greer:
You've got fifteen miles of sacred road between that hotel and the church. Some illusionist conjures up a lady in white robes over the carriage and we're not going to get her past the Treasury building without a full-scale uprising. She's got a handful of followers over there now. Let them make the first move. We have two legions in a ring around the hotel. It's no different from Roachland . . .

General Steinem:
Swoon Country.

General Greer:
Whatever. Or Cerebus. Cirin's pattern has been pretty obvious. She told us to anticipate little pockets of 'infection' with the Ascension at hand. In each case, her orders were the same: a strong military presence around the perimeter. No one in. No one out. Containment, pure and simple.

General Greer:
I think you can understand that with so much at stake, we need more information on her condition. Specifics.

Dr. Cameron:
I understand that. The specifics haven't changed since I examined her earlier today. She has a minor fracture of one of the bones in her right forearm. I've put a cast on and the fracture should be healed in eight to ten weeks. She has a minor fever. Her respiration is normal. Her pulse is normal.

General Greer:
And she's in a coma.

Dr. Cameron.
Well. I haven't changed my opinion on that either. A coma is brought on by three things; disease, injury or poison. She shows no symptoms of any disease with which I'm familiar, although since she can't answer any questions, all I can do is go by appearances as well as examining any bodily excretions, which have showed no abnormalities. You've provided me with samples of all the food and drink that she's consumed in the last two days and there's no sign of any poison. And apart from the fracture in her arm and some minor bruising on her shoulders and upper body from the rubble that fell on her, there's no sign of injury. Her pupils respond normally to strong light.

General Greer:
So you still think that she's . . .

Dr. Cameron·
Asleep. Yes.

General Greer.
Then why doesn't she wake up?

Dr. Cameron:
That I couldn't tell you. I've discussed this with a number of other physicians, I've referred to all texts available on the subject and I'm unable to find anything which is applicable. The world of medicine is filled with the unexplainable. We know a great deal more now than we knew ten years ago, but medical conditions that we don't recognize are not unusual. When they occur, all we can do is observe the condition and make notes on it.

General Greer·
And what happens in these unrecognizable cases?

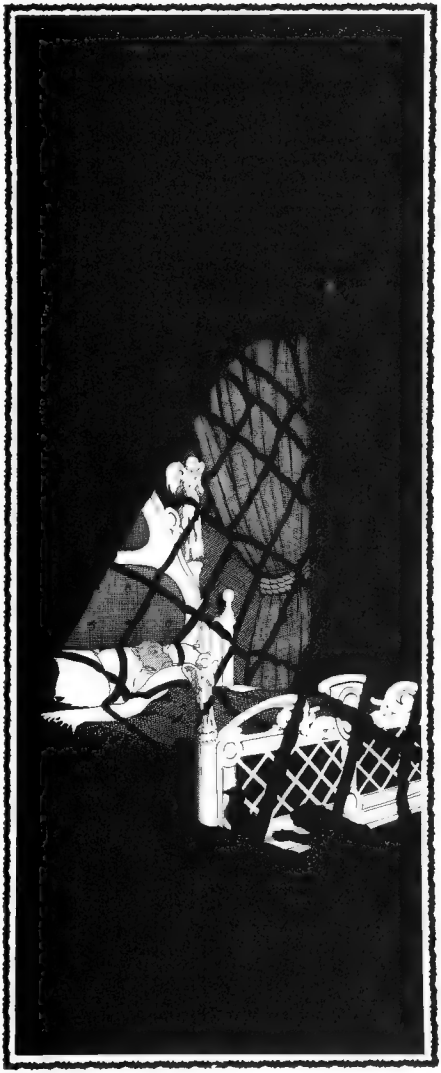
Dr. Cameron:
The patient gets better or the patient dies.

General Greer:
Is it sorcery, then?

Dr. Cameron:
My personal opinion? As a physician I believe that unexplained conditions get blamed on sorcery because our knowledge of medicine is limited. I think when the day comes that we know all there is to know about the human body, the very idea of sorcery will vanish into the realm of folklore.

General Greer:
The soldier who brought you here will return you to your home. You will be summoned to conduct another examination around dawn.

Dr. Cameron:
Certainly. Good evening.



General Steinem:
Well, why not bring in a witch or a healer of some kind?

General Greer:
Consider the likelihood that they are illusionists. Most of them are you know. Do you know enough about it to choose the right one?

General Steinem.
Well, you've brought in 'that Doctor'. I don't really see that there's a great deal of difference. Most of *them* are Kevillists. How do *you* know that *you* chose the right one?

General Greer:
Dr. Cameron has provided invaluable assistance to Cirin in her development of many of the potions and medications that save hundreds and hundreds of . . .

General Dworkin:
Maybe *he* poisoned her. Have you considered that? Swabbing those pads around in her mouth and her nostrils and her ears and her . . . her . . .

General Greer
He said that bodily excretions are the only things that he has to . . .

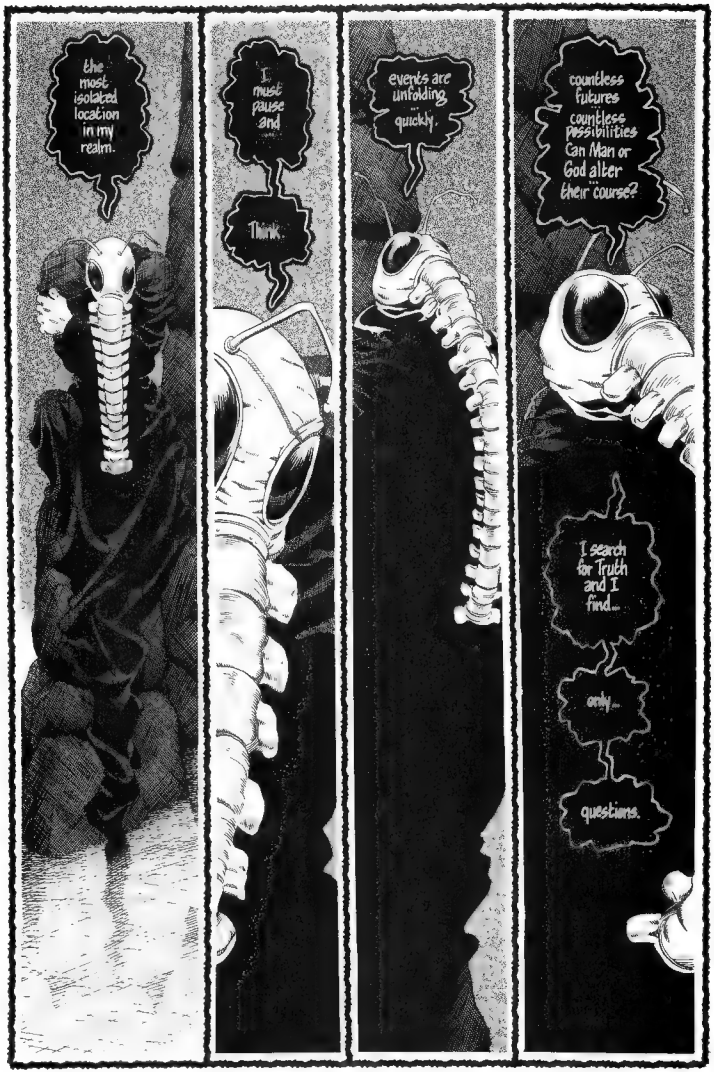
General Dworkin
It's unnatural, is all. Unnatural and disrespectful. The living incarnation of the Goddess is in our care and we stand around with our mouths open while some pervert goes poking and prodding around under her night-shirt as if she were some sort of .

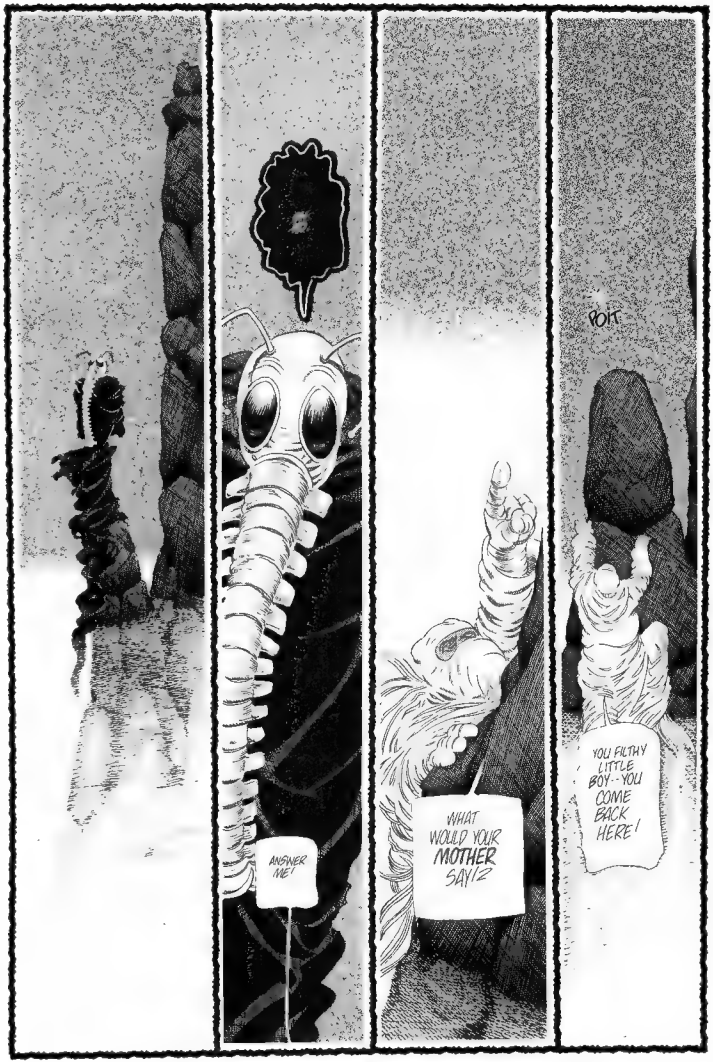
General Steinem:
I agree. So much of this is starting to seem like a judgement on us all. The mountain crushes the Upper City for the first time in history and then we allow ourselves to be a party to the violation of the Living Goddess. I think we've earned her disfavour for becoming as corrupt as Astoria herself. The Goddess is testing our purity and I say we've failed Her.

General Greer:
This is no time for some hysterical . . .

General Dworkin:
Haven't you noticed the smell in here? We've brought corruption on ourselves. We've become a party to it. A catalyst for it. Everything we do just drags us deeper and deeper into the cesspool Cirin has always warned us about. What are we going to do? Answer me that. *What* are we going to *do*?

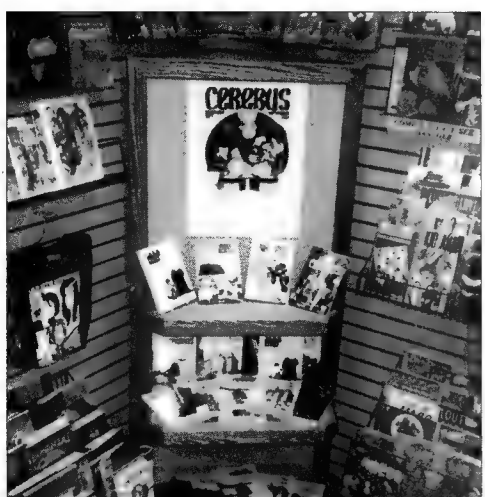
General Greer:
The only thing we *can* do. Wait for Cirin to awaken.


countless futures countless possibilities Can Man or God alter their course?
I search for Truth and I find...
only...
questions.
events are unfolding... quickly.
I must pause and
Think.
the most isolated location in my realm.


ANSWER ME!
WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER SAY!?
POW
YOU FILTHY LITTLE BOY--YOU COME BACK HERE!

CEREBUS CAMPAIGN '93

'From concept sketch to prototype in a little over eight months.'



Moondog's Lincoln Park

PROJECT: MOONDOG. PHASE TWO. From concept sketch to prototype in a little over eight months. Not a bad record, I'd say. Modifications from the initial sketch: The prototype boutique display is more compact and 'squared off' to conserve floor space. Although the initial project called for making the plans available, Jerry Nelson, who designed and constructed the prototype has expressed a willingness to produce the stand itself and ship it to interested stores. Also, now that we've all had a good look at it, we've decided that painting the stands to blend in with the participating stores' colour schemes was impractical (we can't expect Jerry to stock cans of paint for every possible request, now can we?) and also tended to make the stand blend in with the environment, when what we want it to do is stand out (no pun intended). So we've opted to make the stands solid black, which should help emphasize the black and white covers of the reprint volumes. Circumstances, unfortunately, conspired so that Larry Marder had to photograph the stand when *Moondog's* was 'between shipments' of the reprint volumes. What you see is all they had left. The 'real' stand will have individual books with the covers displayed outwards, alternating with piles of the books with the spines facing outward; like a REAL bookstore. The First Half poster is 'standing in' (again, no pun intended) for the framed Cerebus print which will be supplied to participating stores on an annual or bi-annual basis. We'll also be looking into a brass Cerebus logo which can be hung on the stand over the print, as well as the plaque mentioned in issue 160. Interested stores can contact Jerry Nelson at 13211 Lutes Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20906. *Moondog's* will be forwarding all the mail they received on Phase One to Jerry when we move on to Phase Three. Stay tuned.

side of the line caused by the pressure. Once you throw on the solid blacks, the page rolls up like cheap wall paper and you have to be holding it down with both hands and one arm to keep it flat. Of course it isn't flat, it's all rippled so after a certain point you're half-inking and half-surfing Cross-hatching lines and keeping them parallel on Big Two art paper is like trying to scotch tape waves to a beach in a straight line.

I digress

Once you have a variety of papers and boards cut to a variety of sizes, buy a variety of pencils. They go from really hard to really soft. If the pencil is too hard, the line is going to be impossible to see without digging right into the page and if you try to erase it, the pencil line will come off, but there will be an indentation. If the pencil is too soft, it's almost impossible to make a distinctive line, the line will be very dark and when you try to erase it it will just smudge and smear. You'll also have to sharpen it every three or four seconds and you'll use about four pencils per page. 2H 3H and 4H are the usual range. You'll see the difference between them when you test them on the art boards that you have purchased. Draw a quick little head or something with each of the three pencils; not the splash page to your two hundred page epic. You're learning how to swing the club; not teeing off on a sudden death hole at a Masters Tournament in Augusta. An electric pencil sharpener is a must. If you watch professional billiard players, they chalk their cue between every shot. Amateurs put as much chalk on as they can to last three or four shots or don't remember to chalk again until they muff a shot because of too much friction. The same principle obtains. Sharpen your pencil so that it is sharp enough for you. If it's too sharp it'll snap off and you'll be pencilling with a jagged point. If it isn't sharp enough you won't be able to pencil detailed lines clearly enough to know what to ink. Sharpen, pencil, sharpen, pencil. It becomes part of the rhythm. The pencil is perfectly pointed for a while and then gets a little dull. Sharpen. Point is too sharp. Doodle a bit on scrap paper until it's perfect. Pencil. When it starts to get dull, sharpen. As you build up a rhythm, you'll know instinctively how long to hold the pencil in the sharpener and what position to hold it in so you don't have to doodle to make it perfectly pointed. You might want it a little duller than I do or you might want it a little sharper than I do. The right way is the way that is right for you. There are also a variety of erasers. Never use pink erasers, and especially not the ones on the ends of pencils. Never touch the surface of the eraser that you are erasing with. Oil from your hands, an eraser and a pencil line are very bad ju-ju. You'll find that out. Okay. Variety of art papers and boards and quick little two minute heads on them; don't make the drawings too detailed and don't take very long drawing them, because when we get to inking you're going to throw ninety-nine per cent of them away.

★★★★★★★★★★

NEXT: Whether to sign and number your first issue (hey, just kidding)

★★★★★★★★★★

NEXT: Pen nibs, brushes and india ink

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave (I or II — I'm not particular),

I just wanted to send Aardvark Comment a happy PS to my letter which ran in Cerebus 166. My assertion that 'fans are the real power' was ably demonstrated the weekend of January 30–31, when I conducted an impromptu telethon to raise money to fund the publication of *The Collegiate Hepcats*, the first "*Hepcats* phone-book' (at 160 pages, a small-town phonebook) collecting all of the earliest *Hepcats* material dating from the *Daily Texan* newspaper strip days all the way to the first issue of the regular series. $1059.00 in credit card orders was raised in a 48 hour period!

This is only a small dent in the projected $7500 printing bill, but it is an incredible amount of money considering the telethon had only two weeks' advance notice over the Internet, which only reaches a minute handful of *Hepcats*' readers. *Hepcats*' fan base is still modest, but they are the greatest fans in the world. (They're even starting to write me multi-page letters detailing their personal problems. Stay tuned to *Hepcats* 11 for the next K-Man adventure!) Such amazing financial support from a bunch of folks who are probably no richer than I deserves public recognition. Here's the honor roll of telethon participants: Daniel Eyer; Ryan Alexander; Erik Zolan; A.T. Campbell III; Charles Lochel, Jr.; Philip Birmingham; Jack Huang, Wendell Hicken (who had never read *Hepcats* before and decided now was as good a time as any to check it out); Jim Ottaviani; Ray Benson; Mitchell Cox; Thomas Pluck; Matt High (who has done so much driving, hauling, and promo work for Double Diamond he had to pull my teeth out to let him give me his money); David Lamacchia; Philip Rutledge; Hank Graham; Mark S. Davidson; and Glenn Carnagey, Jr.

Honorable mention goes to Austin fan Thomas White, who showed up very early Sunday morning (as I'd been up all night) bearing a big bag of bagels and cream cheese, which fortified me for most of the following week. A fed cartoonist is a happy cartoonist! Also, thanks to Austin fan Andrew Hackard for further Net access and sundry support.

If any of your readers think they'd be interested in *Collegiate Hepcats*, paperbacks are $12.00 ppd. and hardcovers are $25.00 ppd. Hopefully the book will see daylight before summer is here.

Martin Wagner
Double Diamond Press
9300 Northgate Blvd., #116
Austin, Texas
USA 78758-6105

We've just experienced our largest increase in orders between two issues in over eight years, as well. All of the retailers I've spoken to in the last month or so have been gleefully reporting their nose-diving Marvel sales. They're all taking a financial hit out of it, but not one of them has expressed anything but deep-felt satisfaction at this turn of events. They attribute it to 1) bad art and story 2) an excessive number of titles 3) a complete switch from Marvel to Image and Valiant on the part of their adolescent customers. Now, we're getting somewhere.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Just a small clarification: The *Alien* adaptation you praise in the latest Aardvark Comment (#166) is by Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson, not Walt alone.

Thanks for running the text of your address to the Diamond Seminar. Your efforts to promote a creator-supportive industry are a rare combination of pragmatic insight and a commitment to the medium over the package; they provide every bit as much food for thought as the ongoing *Cerebus* storyline itself.

Your comments about reorders not existing takes on an especially ironic note for me. I'm not in a hurry — I don't care if it takes a couple of days, a couple of weeks or a couple of months to get the comics I want, as long as I get them. But I've been trying since last fall to get copies of Jo Duffy and Maya Sakamoto's *Nestrobber* and Colleen Doran's *A Distant Soil* through my local comics store, and despite the fact that advertising flyers list the books as available for reorder (the store never got them in their initial release, of course) and Jo Duffy telling me directly that the books are available, the distributor (Diamond) just isn't coughing them up. This isn't the store's fault — the manager's shown me the reorder slips she's sent in — so it must be the distributor. Jo has offered to send me her books directly, but I'd rather get them through the store. That way, the manager can order a couple of extra copies (she's told me she's done this) so they can go out on the shelves and maybe attract the attention of customers who wouldn't otherwise know those series exist.

I expect I'll have to give up in the end and get the books through the creator/publishers. It'll be a shame — sure, Jo, Maya and Colleen will make a greater profit by selling directly to me, but they (and the distributor, and the retailer) will lose the possibility of expanding their readership, their customer base and their bottom line. And all because a distributor can't be bothered to make books that a publisher wants to sell available to a retailer who wants to sell them to a customer who wants to buy them.

That's efficiency for you.

By the way, since you liked the regional Texas beers you tried in Dallas, make sure to try the Portland area microbrews next time you're out in Portland or Seattle. And if you haven't tried them already, there are some good local beers in your area — Conners Imperial Stout, Upper Canada Dark Ale, Upper Canada Lager, Iron Duke Winter Ale and Wellington County Bitter.

Best,

Kurt Busiek

This is still a universal problem. With the huge volume of material that Capital and Diamond handle they can only effectively handle whatever is absolutely current unless it is a book that was considered 'hot' at the time of solicitation so they have a stockpile of them. What seems to make a book 'hot' in Capital or Diamond's catalogue is directly related to how much money was spent advertising it in the catalogue. One prominent retailer in New York state told me he is switching from Capital to Comics Unlimited (a small regional distributor) because of the complete lack of reorders on any book that isn't 'hot'. Campaign '93 is an attempt to work on the problem from the retail end, while continuing to do what we can from the publisher side. The prognosis is not good; I have yet to speak to any retailer who has been able to get an issue of Cerebus on re-order. We're all working on it though.

★★★★★★★★★★

Hi!

I've just come back from one of the worst experiences of my life. Let me tell the story from the beginning.

I have never been the kind of guy to open up to people, so I have never had any real close friends. Except for this one guy. During the time I knew him I found we had a lot in common. I felt I could talk to him about anything, and I thought he felt the same way. Imagine my feelings when I got the word that he had killed himself because of angst. This happened about two and a half years ago. I mean, I felt shitty in the funeral and all, but I guess I never really realised that he was really gone until today. I went to visit his grave for the first time. Seeing his name on that tombstone just kicked the shit outta me. So now I'm trying to write a growing depression out of my system, sorry if I bring you down in the process, but where the hell else can I send such a letter?

I like to close with a poem I wrote some hours after I got the message.

EMPTY WORDS

I tried to say my feelings
I knew I shouldn't
I tried to write them down in verse
You know I couldn't

A pain
So great
So hard
Feeling empty

You are gone
WHY?

I thought we were close
Eight years
Meant nothing

We shared
Experience
Laughter
Life!

I told you all my troubles
You said you had none

Did my pain kill you?
Did the sympathy cost too much?

Alone
On my knees on the floor
My head in a chair
Feeling drained

Neil Young singing
"Tonight's the Night"
Too much pain

I cry out
YOU HAD EVERYTHING!

Didn't you?

Thanks for being a constant in my life!

Are- Morten Braaten
Bygdoy Alle 68
0265 Oslo
Norway

P.S. I'll try to be more cheerful next time.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

When I met you in Berkeley during your tour you told me I should write to you and that you would give me a huge headline "Nicole strikes back." That way I could tell your readers that *Rob* had left *me* and not vice versa. (So he should quit his whining.) Well, I never did write then (I figured it would blow over and, eventually, I would be left in peace), but I sure want to write now. Not to respond to Rob, but instead to respond to his/our "friend" Larry.

In the Aardvark Comment section of #165, Larry has a letter printed which ends: "Now I know why Rob Lavender broke up with her (me)." Well, Rob and I discussed it and we both feel that it was offensive. First of all it was presumptuous of Larry to assume

he understands our situation. (Rob and I actually broke up, almost two years ago now, with a mutual decision. *We* don't even know exactly why we split up: it was just time to move on. He happened to be the one to leave the Bay Area.) Secondly, it was (I think) a rude thing to say about anyone. So I confronted Larry about his letter and told him it offended both me and Rob. Larry said: "Fuck Rob. Fuck you. I just wanted to get a letter printed by Dave. Besides, you're psycho."

Well Dave, I feel it's time to make my voice heard. I'm tired of having my personal life hashed out in your comments pages by everyone else. Your comment to Larry was "Leave us all hanging why don't you" well, *I* want to set the record straight. Just wanting to get published is not a very good reason to spit in someone's face. Especially when you keep telling them that you're their friend.

Dave, I'll tell you, I probably *still* would not have written this letter if Larry's verbal response to me hadn't been so spiteful. But look out Laurence Douglas Young, Jr. — If you want to start something, you'd better be ready! There is a lot more to this story, but I guess I shouldn't sink to telling it. Suffice it to say: I'm fed up.

Okay now faithful *Cerebus* readers out there, I have two questions for you. 1) Do you *really* want to hear these personal melodramas in a letter section that should be dedicated to how cool Cerebus is? 2) Are there any nice, normal guys out there who read *Cerebus?* (No offense Dave, but I've been thinking of using *Cerebus* as a gauge: a guy reads it, he's outta here.)

So that's how things stand with me right now. I didn't write sooner because, personally, I felt the answer to question #1 is people don't want to hear about this shit; they're reading about Cerebus. But maybe I'm wrong — and besides — that letter from Larry was the last straw! I don't know what his trip is, but from what I've seen so far — I don't think I want tickets.

Thanks for letting me write this Dave! And Lar, I don't know why you told Patrick Donley not to mention me or Rob, but I think you should take his advice and spend your time getting a job (rather than getting off.)

So now, here's to hoping there's a reader out there who can prove my gauge theory of question #2 wrong!

Nicole Rodney
911 Dwight Way
Berkeley, CA
USA 94710

I phoned Nicole to ask if she REALLY wanted me to print the letter. She ultimately excised a couple of really juicy paragraphs. By all accounts, Larry is a little put out by all this, but I think she's entitled to her say, don't you?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

This letter will probably take a long time to get to the real point so please bear with it.

I went out, last weekend, for a regular night of normal teenage revelry. It was rolling along just like a usual Saturday; me and my friends growing ourselves up too fast with too many drinks and too many smokes. In the midst of the proceedings, I met a girl. As the proceedings proceeded, we talked (Well, I talked; she seemed shyer than I am) and eventually ended up in a major kiss up situation. At the end of the evening I gave her my phone number, and she said she'd ring me the next day so we could go out.

On Sunday afternoon, she (I won't use her name, or mine for that matter. She might read *Cerebus!*) did ring. The two of us decided to go to the cinema that evening.

At the time I believed that we'd be going in a group of mutual friends. Looking back this would've taken a lot of the pressure off of both of us. When I actually got to the cinema, though, it was just me and her. Kinda cosy, huh? NOT! (Sorry about that last insert. *Wayne's World* has just hit Britain). It was very awkward.

We had a while before the film started to become more acquainted with each other (Dumb society. Kiss/whatever first, ask questions later). I say each other, but really I was doing practically all the talking. Ironically I believe I managed to project myself quite presentably, something that doesn't happen too often. Anyway, from the snatches of conversation I could involve her in I gleaned that we had a wide variety of things not in common with each other. I began to take what was probably her embarrassment as being a sign of her dislike for me; she wasn't saying anything to me. I started to think then that the relationship was going to a big nowhere, and that we just wouldn't see each other again. So, I just watched the film. There were no sly arm 'round the shoulder movements, no kissing. We didn't even hold hands.

Coming out of the cinema, the verbal exchanges were as stilted as ever. Fortunately, the walk to our leaving point was short. When we actually came to part, my shyness overcame me as it often does in overly many social situations. I couldn't tell her the simple glib facts that I liked her but I just didn't want to see her on a boyfriend-girlfriend basis. So I mumbled a farewell which subtly pointed towards the idea ('I *might* call you sometime and we *might* go out sometime' I think my exact words were. Shit, my limitations as a social being are endless too often!) and ran off down the steps to the bus station.

"She'll not call me." I tried to convince myself. "She just doesn't like me." I was hoping but really I could tell that she did.

The following Tuesday she did call me. She asked if I wanted to come out for a drink. "I don't know" I said. I still couldn't tell her, and I fumbled around for a good excuse. I blurted out that I was working all week (at least it wasn't a lie) and she told me it was okay if I didn't want to. The non-relationship ended there.

I felt like the wolf that ate her Grandma. She had given me proof that she did like me, and I didn't have the decency to overcome my embarrassment to give her a proper explanation. Yesterday, I saw some of her friends. They told me a bit more about her; that she never usually meets anyone relationshipwise, and that she had really fallen for me. Hell, I must've hurt her bad, and I feel awful that I did, but we just didn't seem to connect. I've caused this sort of pain before and each time it's been unintentional. I don't seem to break hearts I seem to swallow them whole.

But that's not my real point. I'm not whining that I'm evolving into some kind of love sadist. I want to highlight how men (Fuck, I hit 18 and I think I'm all grown up) can hurt women without wanting to. I mean when talking to my friends who are female, I often hear how awfully they've been treated by their boyfriends. Then I'll hear comments along the "Men are bastards" line. In the past, I've usually agreed. Many guys will hurt their lovers intentionally for selfish reasons. Now though, I can see

how my actions can be seen as just as bastardy. I'll probably be seen as a 'typical male', but I swear to God I didn't mean to hurt her. So, all you out there, next time partner emotionally wounds you for life please take into account that they may have just been coping with a situation the only way they could.

(Fuck, I must feel as shitty as she does)

Yours, Fly.

Hey, welcome to the world of romance. You're either trying to pick up lint with a magnet or watching someone's planet explode on contact with your gravitational field. Close, closer, too close. I wish I could tell you that it gets better, but I'm pushing forty and its only gotten worse. C'est la vie.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I'm getting real tired of people bashing all the comics that they for some reason don't like. These are the people writing in complaining about Image or Marvel or DC for the crime of not making enough books that they can get into. This is a big medium. It's big enough for the conglomerates as well as the alternatives. Look, you can not like something. I think superheroes having the lion's share of the market is unfair too, but just because something isn't high art doesn't mean it doesn't have a place, and it doesn't mean it's not good. There is a place for everything. Titles like *Archie* or *Mickey Mouse*, or *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* provide a bridge for new readers of *Spiderman* or *Batman*. *Spiderman* or *Batman* provide a bridge to the X books and eventually more sophisticated books like Peter David's *Incredible Hulk*. Eventually this provides a bridge to books like *Sandman* and *Cerebus*. Think about it. How many people start comics with *Sandman* or *Cerebus* or *Hellblazer*. There is of course the argument that books like *Eightball* or people like R. Crumb bring people to books like *Sandman* and *Cerebus*, but it doesn't usually work out that way. It is entirely possible that some non-comics reader will get turned on to comics because out of curiosity they read *Maus*. That is not likely.

Therefore, we have to welcome and embrace these more popular, less sophisticated books because they bring in more new readers who will eventually switch over to books like *Cerebus* when they tire of the *X* and *Spider* books.

Not all comics are created equally, to assume that is arrogance. To denounce *Spiderman* because it's not as intelligent as *Cerebus* is ignorance on the part of the denouncing party. Of course it's not as intelligent. It's written for a difference audience. When reading these books take into account who they're written for. If it is a success with its audience in terms of how well received the story is (not number of copies sold) then it is a good comic. If it's a success beyond its audience, then it's a great comic. This isn't to say that *Spiderman* readers aren't as intelligent as *Cerebus* readers, just that a teenage audience thinks differently from an adult audience. As Jim Valentino said (I'm paraphrasing) "Just because you have a show like Nova, that doesn't preclude the existence of Captain Kangaroo", it's the same thing with comics. Just because I enjoy an issue of *Sandman*, that doesn't mean that I can't enjoy an issue of *Spawn* (McFarlane's doing a fine job on that book and his writing's much better then when he did *Spiderman*). Just because I like Peter David's *Hulk* and *X-Factor* doesn't mean I can't equally enjoy an issue of *Hellblazer* or *Shade*, or *Swamp Thing*, or *Cerebus*. Just because I like *Groo* or *TMNT* (mirage) every so often, that doesn't mean I'm incapable of being blown away by *The Crow*. To summarise, just because someone reads and enjoys Stephen King and pulp science fiction, that doesn't mean that the same person can't read and enjoy John Steinbeck, Voltaire, and Edgar Allan Poe.

In closing, if you can't enjoy the mainstream books, respect them for what they are. If they entertain their audience, God bless them. When they cease to entertain that's where the alternative press comes in. That audience that enjoyed the *X-men* or *Superman*, or what have you will then cross over to books like this one and validate the whole cycle, which will start all over again. Remember, we all have to start somewhere, and isn't reading Marvel and then switching over to a *Cerebus* or *Sandman* better than never experiencing *Cerebus* or *Sandman*. We all start somewhere, and if the ends justify the means, is being a fanboy (or girl) really all that bad?

Sincerely,

P.S. To Dave: This page isn't really for Aardvark Comment, just a personal aside . . . *Cerebus* is great! Although I'm only on my 3rd issue *Cerebus* in on my monthly buy list and I will soon be filling an order for some of the phone books. This is the way the medium should be used but isn't. I also like Aardvark Comment being a forum for not just *Cerebus*, but everyone and everything.

Keep up the great work.

Until #300.

Charles Brownstein
Editor & Publisher -
Feature Magazine
North Mills, CA

Well, the next letter is a good case in point. Everyone has different tastes. There isn't a single comic book being published that someone doesn't actively hate for some reason and everyone has their own personal 'top ten' list.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave, Dave,

I think everyone here is missing the original question. It wasn't 'Is Gary Groth a complete dipstick?' (I see no evidence to the contrary — *Stinz* got cancelled after all) but 'Is *Sandman* any good?'

Is *Sandman* any good?

Not is *Sandman* better than the bulk of the crap put out by any of the big companies, but is it any **good!**

I like *Sandman*. I think Neil manages a remarkable thing in producing a DC, sorry Vertigo, comic that assumes that we, the readers, are adults. I enjoyed the first issue of the Death mini series and I will buy the rest. I would say *Sandman* is one of the greatest second class comics out there.

Don't get me wrong. If *Sandman* is second rate then Marvel is producing nothing that's even fourth rate and there are very few DC or Image comics joining it on the plateau that is second rate.

Sandman has flaws, in particular the flaws are the amazing flow of artists (so incredibly distracting in a book that begs reading in big chunks) and that I never get the feeling that *Sandman* matters to Neil. It may be very well written hackwork, but hackwork it remains.

So what is first rate? *Cerebus* of course, *Zot*, *Beanworld*, *Desert Peach*, *Tales of the Beanworld* (I can't even write 'Come back Larry,

all is forgiven' when I read your editorials telling me what a good job he is doing now) *V for Vendetta*. People tell me that *Yummy Fur* should be on the list as well, but since no-one will import it into Yorkshire I've only read the odd issue. Perhaps *Bone* should be there as well, but I need to catch a few more issues.

What do all these comics have in common? Personal commitment. A feeling that deep down the creator is telling us a story that is important to them.

Sandman isn't a **bad** comic, but it isn't the greatest comic ever written. Sandfans get almost as embarrassing as Image fans (No offence meant Travis, good to have you aboard) when they are telling the whole damn world how *Sandman* is the only comic worth reading, the only comic published in fact since the beginning of time. Sandfans suffer from this bizarre belief because they don't read any other comics, they have no experience of what else is out there and so they deify the only comic to cross their event horizons.

Like I said *Sandman* isn't bad; in fact it's a casework showing just how a piece of work for hire should be done. Every mainstream comic could do well to take a leaf out of Sandman's book, but that has more to do with how chronically bad most comics are than how good *Sandman* might be.

But it isn't **good.** It isn't *Cerebus*.

Now that I've pissed off every Sandfan in sight do you mind if I ask the collective unconsciousness a few questions.

Does anyone know if the Image market share has been gained at the expense of either Marvel or DC or is it caused by punters spending more cash than they were before?

If we are really to believe that Superman is dead, why are DC still selling subscriptions?

Is there a name for Image fans yet?

Yours,

Nick Eden
81 Fourth Avenue
Heworth
York
UK

P.S. I loved Swoon's entrance. I would have bid for it, but the state the pound's been in it wouldn't have been worth it.

Anyone doing a monthly comic book is open to the charge of doing hackwork. If your criteria for quality is that it must take several days to do a single page, then a monthly comic isn't quality. On the subject of the amazing flow of artists, this is a peculiarity of DC comics. If they have a hot book, they credit the writer with the success and lavish all their attention on him. When Bissette told me all the horror stories of his and John's inhuman treatment by DC while Alan Moore was being treated like the Second Coming on Swamp Thing, I was dumbfounded. They can't hold a Sandman art team because they treat them all like shit. The artists put up with it as long as they can, realizing that a stint on the book can be a real career-maker, and then leave while they still have a shred of sanity left. Evidently the practice dates back to Siegel and Shuster. Can Neil do anything about it? No. No more than Alan could. In a company structure there is no way to ask for fairer treatment of another employee. Most especially in a freelance situation where you are essentially 'piece-work outside labour'. If you don't like your situation, you have two choices. You can stay or you can leave.

Period.

And for the record, I disagree with you about Sandman. They may have damaged it with all the bad karma vis-a-vis the artists, but I still think it is a most remarkable piece of art.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Tonight's the party. Hope you enjoy it. You've earned it, as if you needed me to tell you. I won't be heading up—it's a long cold drive and I don't like parties where the only person I'd know I'd have to re-introduce myself to. My car probably wouldn't make it either. Sniff. Melodrama. Cheap. Anyway, I hope your hangover has subsided by the time you read this.

The "profit" from the Usenet Interview mini-comics I sent to the CBLDF totalled US $157.56. Thanks for your support. I enjoyed doing it. Small potatoes considering the $10,000 you donated, but I think every little bit counts in these things.

As for the ongoing electronic version, here's the only response I got to the latest installment.

From: Mark "Crimson" Friedman <friedman@cis.ohio-state.edu>
To: jim.ottaviani@um.cc.umich.edu
Newsgroups: rec.arts.comics.misc
Subject: Re: Dave Sim (Cerebus) — The Usenet Interview (X)

As to Dave's call for ideas on using computer methods to reach potential fans during Campaign '93, I think a computer equivalent of the "Free Cerebus" comic would be helpful

Practically every BBS in America (and most likely Canada, too!) has a comic sub-board. We could easily propagate the "Electronic Cerebus" around the country by this method, asking people to pass a copy along to another BBS they know. Sorta like a "Cerebus Virus"! ;-)

As to the content, the majority could be scanned GIFs, I suppose. You'd have to do tests to see how the puppies scan, though: some of that iddy-biddy crosshatching that Gerhard does would lose a lot of resolution! I guess it would be a judgement call: scan a few pics and see if it's worth it.

The screen display package would be easy enough to write, and could be ported across several platforms, considering the readership of RACM that are programmers. *shrug* It could work, I guess. Then again, it would be targeting high-school kids, demographically . . .

- Mark Friedman

Another idea —
CEREBUS: THE FAX-CHAIN LETTER! ;-)

* * *

I expected a few more responses, considering the interest the interview itself generated. I think Mark's first idea has merit. So does his second one, for that matter, but implementing it would certainly be rude and perhaps bordering on illegal. Count me in.

Some details about his first idea, in case you're not clear on what he means:

Practically every BBS in America (and most likely Canada, too!) has a comic sub-board.

I think I sent you some information about the Usenet, Internet, etc. a while back. These descriptions should have, if they didn't, indicated that the Usenet is not the only widely distributed electronic "bulletin board/free-for-all" out there. Usenet primarily reaches people with access to computers that use the Unix operating system, a powerful and expensive platform developed by AT&T for power users. Experts, or even reasonably competent, Unix programmers are known as wizards, for good reason. I used to border on wizardry back when I worked as an engineer, but these days I've forgotten most of what I knew and once again find Unix

rather arcane and unpleasant. That's a long-winded way of saying that there are a whole bunch of other bulletin boards out there that reach a quite different audience. You may have heard of CompuServe or Prodigy — they're just a few of the other platforms that we've probably not hit with the interview, solely because I don't have accounts on any of those things. But lots of folks do, and most of them are civilians and real people. Those who aren't are usually younger than college age. Just the folks you want to target, as I recall.

As to the content, the majority could be scanned GIFs, I suppose. You'd have to do tests to see how the puppies scan, though: some of that iddy-biddy crosshatching the Gerhard does would lose a lot of resolution!

GIF stands for Graphic Interchange Format. It's a document format that takes an original image and displays it as an image a lot like what you get when you e.g. fax a sketch to Todd McFarlane. You can get a whole lot better resolution than a fax image with a GIF, though. To get the scanned image, you "photocopy" the art using a device called a scanner. I've enclosed a couple examples of some b&w scans I did to see how the scanner we have at work would do. Most scanners are better than the one in the library and can handle gray-levels, but these should give you an idea of how illustrations would look at their worst. As Mark mentions, your art contains a lot of detail and its hard for me to guess how well they would scan and how much time it would take to touch up afterwards (the enclosed shots took me a while because I didn't use gray levels.)

The screen display package would be easy enough to write, and could be ported across several platform, considering the readership of RACM that are programmers.

This is a part I personally couldn't do quickly. You would want the Free Electronic Cerebus to work on IBM's PCs, Apple's Macintoshes, and Atari's Amigas at the very least. I don't know enough to even guess the level of programming expertise for anything but the Macintosh (small—I know of a number of programs that can do what I think you would want right now).

So that's it from the net. I like Mark's suggestion and am willing to work with you on it. As for my own suggestion, computers can help you in two mundane ways. I do all these letters and did the mini-comic on an Apple Macintosh and laserwriter. The print quality is near typeset, so depending on how much you spend on typesetting and how satisfied you are with it, you might recoup your costs over time by owning one and doing your own page composition. It's not hard. The other way depends on how happy you are with your filing of e.g. addresses. Setting up a database of addresses and then subsequently using it for mailings (mass and targeted) would be simple. With fairly inexpensive machinery and programs and some time spent putting the information in the damn thing you could have, within seconds, lists of all your fans and supporting stores with names beginning with Q-Z in an area/zip-code. Sounds kind of silly when put that way, but you can no doubt think of truly useful things to do along these lines. It appears that you've gotten along quite well without dealing with these silicon beasts, so probably you can get along without one for another long while. But if you find either of those ideas at all attractive or if they prompt a "Hmm. Not that, but I've always wanted to do . . ." let me know.

That's it for know. I've no new questions for you from the Usenet folks. If you'd like, I'll re-run another greatest hits or perhaps run something new you've got for us. Putting it bluntly, though, the thrill of editing people's questions and retyping your responses has faded a bit. (Now if you had a computer and sent me your answers in machine-readable form, then . . . Hmm. Then you wouldn't "need" me at all. Forget it.) So, you could persuade me to call the interview a wrap at ten installments. But I'm with you for the duration, so if you want to carry on say the word and I'll send out another call.

Best,

Jim Ottaviani
605 W. Hoover, #5
Ann Arbor, MI
USA 48103-5474

Hey, it's all greek to me, but if there are any Cerebus computer types out there who understand all this and would like to join Computer Campaign '93, I think Jim would be a good person to start with.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave—

I just wanted to write and thank you for your book. I am currently 19 years old and a sophomore in college majoring in film. I've been reading *Cerebus* since issue #72. When I think about it it doesn't seem all that long but in actuality it's almost eight years.

I was pointed in your direction through the owner of a shop I frequented every now and then at the time. The shop was named *Rocket Comics* and it was located in Greenwood, one of the uglier districts of Seattle. This was the shop that I went to whenever I was visiting my Aunt and needed a comics fix. At the time I was a complete and utter four color fanboy and hadn't started looking for entertainment outside of the big two.

Anyways one of the times that I went in there I found to my great dismay that I had already read all of the latest issues of my regular books. I went through the back issue bins for a while, but decided that I wanted something new. After a period of me scanning and rescanning the new issue racks, Steve (the owner) asked me if he could help me with anything. I said that yes he could recommend something new to me, which he did quite readily. He showed me *Miracleman, Flaming Carrot* and *Cerebus* and told me to take them home, read them and that if I didn't like them he would buy them back from me. I'd never before (and have never since) heard a shop owner make such an offer. I gleefully purchased these new toys and headed back to my Aunts house.

At the time I liked *Miracleman* the best out of the three simply because it was the closest to the other stuff that I was reading at the time and also the easiest to follow since I had the first two issues. *Cerebus* however intrigued me the most. Despite the fact that I had no clue whatsoever what was going on I was very impressed by your sense of humor and most of all your storytelling style. I did not return one of the books and continue to buy all of them to this day.

It wasn't too much later that I knew that you had me for life. I was starting to back issue when numbers 74 & 75 came out. I don't remember ever reading them separately, they seemed to just exist simultaneously. They were quite frankly, and still are in my

opinion the two best issues of a book ever. I had never seen anything like that before in my life.

Over the years *Cerebus* has become a fairly significant part of my life. When I was younger my mother would consistently receive compliments from store owners regarding what an intelligent and mature boy she'd raised to be following *Cerebus* at such a young age. I've attempted to get anybody started on your book who had an open enough mind to give it a try. I've acquired copies of all of the phone books as they've come out (multiple copies of some so that I could always have a copy around while I had another loaned out) and back issues when I've had the money. Often times it seems as though you and my friend Vin are the only truly reliable things in my life.

Cerebus has consistently shown me what comics could and should be. It's like the *Citizen Kane* of comics constantly throwing out new and exciting possibilities for the medium and all the while still telling a good story. I am always surprised as to how many storytelling techniques I can pick up by simply opening an issue of *Cerebus*. And hey, aside from the comics themselves you also include the only fan magazine that's consistently worth reading. Both directly and indirectly through your influence I have been introduced to much of the best work being published today. One of them, Martin Wagner's *Hepcats*, has even begun to rival your book's place in my heart.

Well, I guess I should get back to studying . Thank you for your time (especially since this is handwritten) and thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Ed (Ward)²

This is still the most effective means of generating sales in a comic book store. Let a customer take a copy of something home and try it and let him bring it back at no charge if he doesn't like it. I've suggested having 'reading copies' of the phone books in stores for exactly that reason. One copy of High Society or Jaka's Story and a couple of days to try it out should produce a fair number of on-going readers for a reasonably small investment. Thanks, Ed.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

It's me again. This time I am writing to ask some questions.

1. Are there are more free *Cerebus* issues available.
2. If yes how would I get some.
3. How much would shipping and handling cost or other expenses.

The reason I am asking is that I'm trying to get some support for *Cerebus* in my area, Bradenton, FL. I shop at a comic store called *Cosmic Comics* (Hi Fred) and recently found out that I was the only person getting *Cerebus* in his store. In fact he only gets 1 (count 'em 1) copy of *Cerebus* and this is the one I get in my file. I decided then to try my best to persuade my fellow comic readers to try *Cerebus*. I was thinking of buying some really cheap *Cerebus* comics and hand them out but I ran into a brick wall, there are no cheap *Cerebus* issues and I was broke. (You may recall I spent $67.00 on *Cerebus* back issues last week.) Anyway I was thinking maybe we (Fred, You, and Myself) could get some new readers after the big crossover in *Spawn* (Hi Mr. McFarlane). I just know we can get a few readers. My cousin (Hi Joey) and his good friend (Hi Chad) will sign up to *Cerebus*. Also I'm trying to get some *Cerebus* posters and pins but I'm having a lot of trouble getting them. Where I'm living only one store has *Cerebus* and it stinks. They only order a few and charge WAY too much for back issues, and they never have any good back issues anyway. Fred (The good comic book guy) is trying to get some *Cerebus* but is also having a bit of trouble. He put in a bid for some the other day but he hasn't heard anything, yet. The issues he hopes to get are in the mid 80's so it could be a good starting point for new readers. I am currently trying to get him to order more recent issues and try to get him to put in a good word to all the customers about *Cerebus*. I hope that you can give me some answers on the posters and free issues. We would need to have about 20 of the free issues if you can get them. If there are any promotional posters they would be very helpful and we would be very grateful. Keep up the good work and tell Gerhard that he is doing a great job and that we love his work too. Good luck in the new year.

Sincerely,

Travis Sumner
1211 45th St. West
Bradenton, FL
USA 34209

I hope Fred will consider possibly trying some of the ideas we're coming up with on the letters page. To be honest, I don't think twenty copies of Free Cerebus are going to do much good. Why don't you have Fred contact me and we'll see if we can figure out something that might work out for all of us. Thanks for your interest, Travis.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Today was the first time I'd bought comics in the new year, and so I've just read *Cerebus* 165 this afternoon. I saved reading it (and *Sandman*) 'til last (as that old saying goes . . .) and I was not disappointed. It was wonderful. The 'new' (though it's now over a year old) story line is great, and it seems like everything is happening at once. Like the great eternal chess game of life which Po describes to Cerebus, the story continues to unfold as everything heads towards the final confrontation. Maybe everything just seems much clearer because I'd just re-read the entire story so far (all six phone books) over my Christmas holiday. I'm definitely eager to see what happens next.

It's nice to see actual comments about the story line in Aardvark Comment, and I thought that the observations Mike Sivier made in his letter were excellent. It's also nice to read the many responses from the stops of the tour. I would have loved to have seen you and Gerhard somewhere along the tour, but alas, I attend university far from any of the American stops on the tour. I would have gone to see you at the Toronto stop in August as I live less than an hour away, but I was in the middle of Algonquin park and did not learn of the stop until a week later when I read the article in the *Star* (which my mother had saved for me).

Whenever I read Aardvark Comment, I always look for the name of a friend of mine from high school (who I've lost touch with since graduation) who introduced me to your wonderful comic. When I was in grade nine or ten (I can't remember exactly when) and rather new to collecting comics, my buddy Tim Pak showed me his collection. He told me about this

really cool comic which was all about an aardvark. I read a few of his issues, laughed my ass off, and decided that this was a comic I definitely had to start buying. I didn't understand a hell of a lot of what was going on in the story, but it was funny and it sure looked great. I bought *Cerebus* 85 a few weeks later, and I've been collecting it ever since. I have no idea if Tim even reads *Cerebus* any more, but I always look for his name anyway.

Before I go, I'd like to give a belated, but still very warm and appreciative thank-you for the phone books. I was very impressed with both the quality and the speed of the service. I'd meant to write and thank-you earlier, but being a procrastinator at heart, things seemed to interfere. As some would say, shit happens. I'll write again when I have something else to say.

Thanks,

Brock K. Whalley
Box #457, Howe Hall
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 4J5

P.S. Unfortunately, I've recently had your theory about either the first forty-eight hours or the fan club proved to me. I found out that I'm only "a good friend".

P.P.S. Will Jaka be back soon? please, Please, PLEASE!!!

Oh, hey. You're welcome. Thank *you*. Hey, Tim. You still out there somewhere?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Let me tell you a funny story.

You may or may not have heard recently about a 'news' article that appeared on an Australian national T.V. program called 'Hinch' concerning Spawn #5. 'Hinch' is a current affairs program of news reporters co-ordinated by a chappie called Derryn Hinch. Now, Derryn Hinch is a funny old chappie. He's one of these self-opinionated 'moral majority' types who makes a living from sensationalistic journalism. He has already been jailed for contempt of court. There was a case several years back where a priest was about to go to trial over charges of sexually molesting several boys in a Catholic boys club. Mr. Hinch, in his moral indignation, and against the law, gave the name of this priest on national television just prior to the trial, effectively blowing any chance of an unbiased jury. Mr. Hinch has also been very publicly axed from one T.V. network here in Oz. Recently, he has found favour with another, and is back to his abrasive best. Might add that only recently he has been accused of appearing drunk on T.V. Admitting a drinking problem, he denies that this charge is correct. I reserve judgement in lieu of more facts, unlike some . . .

Anyway, an article of 'Journalism' appeared recently concerning Spawn #5 and the story of Billy Kincaid, the child murderer. A Victorian lad had read the comic and was rather offended by it and told his dear daddy. Now this somehow became investigative and penetrative journalism. The 'offending' store was a place called *Halley's Comix* in Geelong, a small comic store, even by Australian standards. The staff were hassled in typical sensationalistic style by the Hinch reporter and film crew concerning the terrible moral implications of selling comics of this type. The staff weren't prepared for an eloquent defence, and weren't given enough time on-air to discuss the issue, and by the look of it, were a little intimidated by the Hinch reporter. In other words, perfect for sensationalistic, one-sided television, and even better for a generic witch-hunt. Now, what Hinch, in his satisfaction at having done the morally right thing by his adoring audience, failed to do is report on the closure of *Halley's Comix* as a direct result of expected bad publicity resulting from the Hinch show. Looney Christian and moral majority activists in the area had long maintained sporadic 'protests' at the comic store, role-playing events, etc. and they, of course jumped on the band-wagon and fired up again. I don't know how badly this depression is your way, but in rural Victoria, it is pretty bad. We have small business having trouble with overheads, taxes, etc. without worrying about bad publicity (ignorant bad publicity) on national television. So about 5 jobs, 5 more jobs on top of the thousands already lost, we're sacrificed to the sensationalism of Hinch. All this occupied several days before Chrisstmas.

Did Hinch report that? No.

This, of course, opens up that can of worms, censorship, book-banning, freedom of expression, etc. I know that the U.S. and Canada have been copping flack over issues like this over the last few years. But here in country Victoria, indeed most of Australia, we're mostly free of this mentality voicing itself so influentially. Now, it's hit home. I could run over the arguments again for freedom of expression, but we both know them. We had a fair trot in the 80's I think with freedom of expression in comics. I've been thinking for awhile now that the 90's would be a period of returning to the 'moral majority' mentality of censorship and indignation at vulnerable targets.

The entire field of graphic narrative is at a delicate point. There have been incredible leaps in quality in artwork, with the likes of Dave McKean doing some superb art. The writing aspect has been a little slower in terms of being taken seriously as art rather than as entertainment. But I feel that yourself with *Cerebus* and Neil Gaiman with *Sandman* and especially the *Signal' to Noise* graphic novel (an irritating term, but, hopefully, soon, appropriate) is starting to awaken people outside of the comics field to the potential of graphic narrative. Literature is nearly dead. What do you do after de-constructionalism? Re-constructionalism? Visual art is running on previous momentum. But a combination of the two is only now just starting to reach the beginnings of its potential. Even amidst the most full-on marketing tactics of popular comic titles (Popular: catering for popular tastes). The last thing we need is a censorship muzzle to stifle what could be the only art form to survive the 20th century. It needs to be recognized as such, and studied and developed as such. To do that, it must first deserve that type of attention.

The 90's, the last decade of the millenium, could be the make or break of graphic narrative as art. Censorship looms like an executioner's axe, ready to relegate it back to merely an entertainment field. These are my thoughts.

Onto *Cerebus*. Your satire of *Sandman* is quite cutting, especially about Swoon standing around in self-pity mode. (The auto-erotic reference was not lost on me either!) Things are starting to look mystical again, with the self-adjusting forge. A part of the chess-game? And the Cirinist interpretation of Swoon and Cerebus. A touch of Umberto Eco there, finding and interpreting conspiracy where there is none. We

haven't heard from..Lord Julius in a while. Is he looking up some major plot against the Cirinists? Would he be Lord Julius if he wasn't?

One last thing. I know that it has been said before, but I will say it again. Gerhard really does add visual depth to the art. His backgrounds contain so much fine detail without cluttering, or detracting from the foreground events. Ger's views of the city are especially enchanting.

Anyway, I might just leave it there. Let us know when you're coming out to Australia. Sometime before #300 would be nice.

Peter Pascoe
6 McLachlan St., Kangaroo Flat
Bendigo 3555
Victoria, Australia

Well, I don't really think that they're breaking through. There's no question that when they focus on one store or one comic book with limited resources to fight back, they can cause damage. That's what the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is for; that's why these incidents should be publicized in the trade publications with (at the very least) a cry for help to the rest of the community. I doubt we can save everyone who gets into these kinds of situations, but we can sure as hell save some of them and (again, at the very least) fight back.

I hope to be in Australia for the big con early in '94. I'd sure like to hear from someone who's attached to it, though. Same thing with UKCAC' 93. I sure don't want to fly all that way just to wander around the dealers' room looking at X-men back issues.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Maybe I'm looking at the past through rose-tinted glasses, but it seems to me there was a time ten, seven, maybe even three years ago when you were still able to distinguish when someone was Pulling Your Leg.

Happy New Year!

Kim Thompson
Fantagraphics Books
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle Washington
USA 98115

Tired Fantagraphics Rhetorical Trick #3: When someone points out that you sneer a lot and have an arrogant tone, tell them you were just kidding.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

How to describe my feelings upon finally seeing 'Don't You Want Me?' in print: Well, Lee's artwork retains the elegant beauty I had always beheld in it, but did I *really* lean so heavily upon jokes about testicles? I fear so. There goes my chance of reviving 'Angel Love' for the 'Vertigo' line . . .

Introspection apart, we owe you many thanks for giving us the exposure that I arrogantly presume we deserve. Lee and I have been struggling to secure a foothold from which to begin our ascent (or plummet) for a good three years now, and you are the only person to have treated us with anything other than indifference. You are assured of a warm welcome in Brixton, should ever you be foolhardy enough to set foot there.

One minor worry nags at me, however. In your introduction to our piece, you omitted an entire line from our address, (that of our street) thus giving the impression that we reside in some sprawling baronial mansion, and probably also condemning any letters people may have been moved to write us to the nether regions of purgatory. A correction would be welcomed, if you could find the space.

In the mean time, however, after the transient excitement of being able to show off in front of bored comic shop assistants throughout the south east of England, our lives are slowly returning to their humdrum routines; Lee to his existence as a graphic designer, and myself to the final weeks of training as a soon to be unemployed psychiatric nurse. Our proposed graphic novella, 'Heaven' is currently being ignored by a wide range of publishers both here and across the ocean. If you are at all interested in seeing it, we would be overjoyed to send you a copy. Even the harshest of criticisms would come as welcome respite from the sound of silence.

Many thanks once more, and continued success with *Cerebus*.

Love,

Desmond Lagan
p.p. Lee Carey
Flat 6,
Suffolk House,
Rushcroft Street,
BRIXTON, London
United Kingdom

Shame it isn't a sprawling baronial estate. I was going to ask to borrow the west wing for a few weeks after UKCAC '93.

DAVE SIM PERSONAL APPEARANCES 1993

APRIL 14 CALGARY
Styx Warehouse

APRIL 14 CALGARY
Words and Pictures

APRIL 15 CALGARY
BB's SPORTS CARDS

APRIL 16 CALGARY
Another Dimension

APRIL 17, 18, 19 EDMONTON
Warp One (3 locations)

APRIL 19 EDMONTON
Diamond Warehouse

May 3, 4 MADISON
Capital City Trade Show

MAY 16–18
Heroes World Trade Show

JUNE 5–8 ATLANTA
Diamond Seminar

JUNE 11–13 CHARLOTTE, NC
Heroes Con.

JULY 2–4 CHICAGO
Comicon

JULY 31 WINDHAM, MAINE
Casablanca Comics

AUGUST 19–22 SAN DIEGO
Comicon

NOVEMBER 13, 14 MANSFIELD, OHIO
Mid-Ohio Con.

TENTATIVE: UK COMIC ART CONVENTION '93 –
I haven't heard from anyone there yet.

Flight (Mothers & Daughters Book One) will be available from Aardvark Vanaheim as of April 15. Originally, we intended just to offer both the signed and numbered first printing and the regular edition to the direct market, forgetting that a lot of you have specified the same number when ordering *Jaka's Story* and *Melmoth* directly from us. Oops. Our solution? We will be selling the first 435 signed and numbered copies directly by phone and mail order. Please contact us as soon as possible if you want a specific number. First come, first serve. The signed and numbered edition is **$25.00** plus **$3.00** postage and handling. The regular unsigned edition is **$17.00** plus **$3.00** postage and handling.

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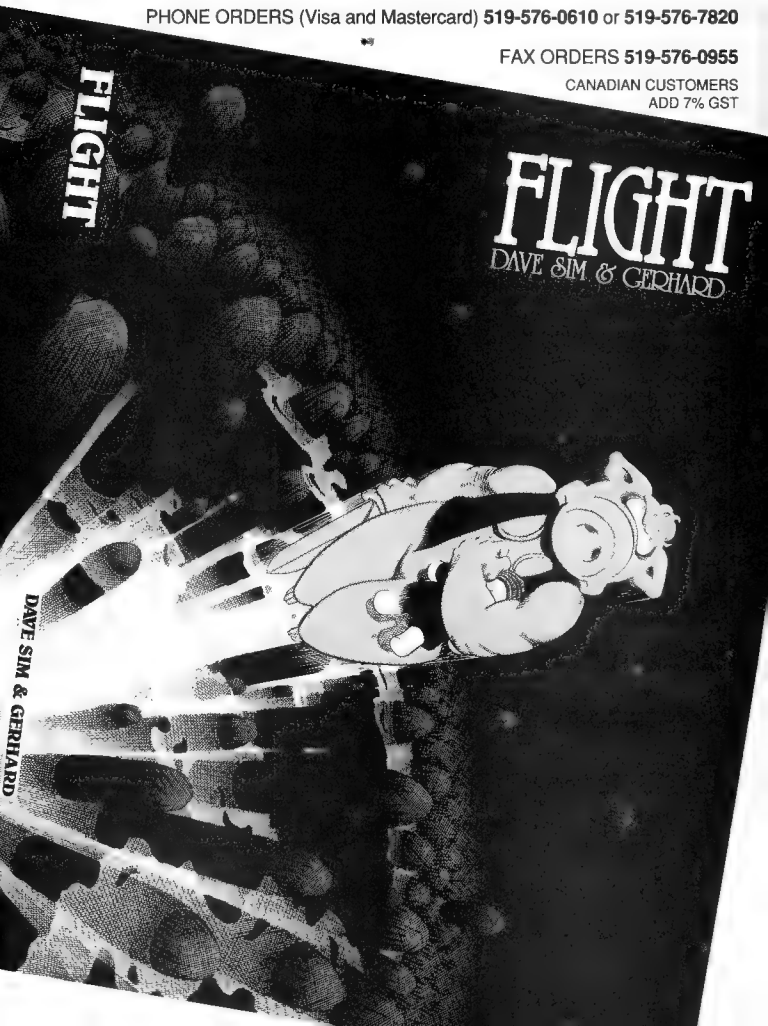

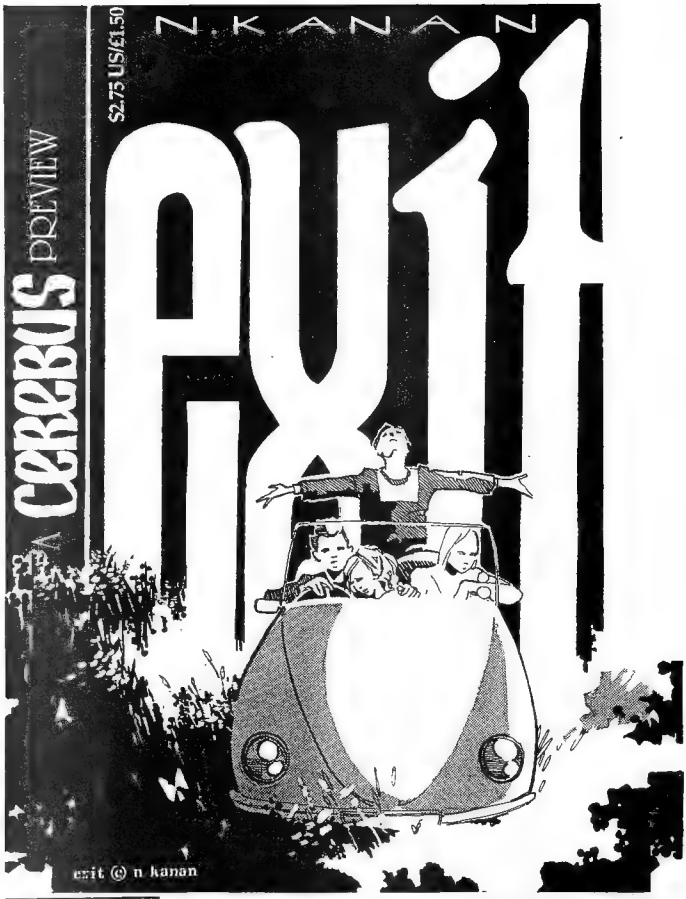

TAXI
COMICS

19 Cornhill Allestree
Derby DE22 2GG UK

School's out forever. A burning summer has begun in Murton, but even as Cig and Karl join their friends in celebration, the past gate-crashes the proceedings with the spectre of Roger Boothe; an old acquaintance who disappeared mysteriously 18 months ago, and whose return threatens to shatter the summer's calm with tragedy.

EXIT by Nabiel Kanan. Published bi monthly by Taxi Comics. Colour cover, b&w interior, 24 pgs, $2.75 US £1.50 UK. Nos. 1,2 &3 still available direct £2.00 US/Can, £1.80 UK. Subscribe 6 issues £12.00 US/Can, £9.00 UK. UK funds only please. ASK FOR EXIT AT YOUR LOCAL COMIC STORE !

CIG!
HEY!
I THOUGHT YOUR MUM WAS WINDING ME UP WHEN SHE SAID YOU WERE AT THE DEN
OH YE OF LITTLE FAITH
HOW WAS SPAIN?
NOT AS HOT AS HERE
ISN'T THERE MEANT TO BE A BAN ON THOSE THINGS?
NO.. I MEANT
GOD YOU'RE GROSS
KEPT MYSELF BUSY THOUGH LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOING MUCH THE SAME.
HUH? WHAT D'YOU MEAN?
OH NOTHING
LISTEN, CIG, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS BUT..
HEY! HEY!!
WHAT?
WELL?
NOT BAD. HAVEN'T I SEEN SOME OF YOUR WORK BEFORE? ON THE SIDE OF A TRAIN?
SO HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO PERSUADE THE BIG BAD WOLF NOT TO BLOW IT DOWN?
DAN'S DAD MANAGED TO GET US PEEP-MISSION FROM THE COUNCIL
HOW'D HE MANAGE THAT?!
WELL HE SPEAKS FLUENT RAT FOR A START
HMM.. THAT WOULD HELP
BESIDES THEY COULDN'T COME UP WITH A PLAUSIBLE OBJECTION. THAT FIRE HAZARD BOLLOCKS WASN'T FOOLING ANYONE
SO..
WHAT'S THE CATCH?
THERE'S NO CATCH
WHAT'S THE CATCH?!
FOLLOW ME
CHRIST!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS PLACE?!
ABOUT SIX MONTHS OF DRY-ROT
WE WANT OUR YOUTH CENTRE BACK - WE HAVE TO RENOVATE IT. AND WE HAVE TO COME UP WITH THE MONEY OURSELVES
AND BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING THERE'S A BLOKE COMING ROUND LATER THIS AFTERNOON, A MR. THORPE. HE OWNS A SMALL CHAIN OF BREWERIES THROUGHOUT THE MIDLANDS. WE'RE HOPING HE MIGHT PUT HIS FINANCIAL MUSCLE BEHIND US.
WHAT DOES HE GET?
QUITE A LOT. HE'S RUNNING FOR A PLACE ON THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE WHAT BETTER PR FOR AN ASPIRING COUNCILLOR THAN HELPING THE DISTRICT'S YOUTH? AND THEN THERE'S THE LITTLE MATTER OF THIS PLACE PROVIDING A PRIME OUTLET FOR HIS BOOZE AND AFFILIATE VENTURES
WHO IS THIS GUY? BEELZEBUB?

WHAT'RE ALL THESE CLOTHES DOING ROUND HERE?
WE' RECKON IT'S SQUATTERS. THEY MUST'VE BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS
URRGH! THAT SMELL! WHAT'VE THEY BEEN DOING OVER THERE?
UH SQUATTING.. PROBABLY.
SICK!
KARL, HAVE YOU SHOWN HIM THE PHOTOGRAPH YET?
WHAT PHOTO-GRAPH?
THIS MORNING?!
IT'S WEIRD YEAH? AND WE WERE ONLY JUST TALKING ABOUT HIM AT GINO'S A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO.
YOU LIVE IN ROG'S HOUSE?
SORRY
NO... I MEAN.. IT'S JUST.. WEIRD THAT'S ALL.
I WAS TELLING LOUISE, IF ANYONE KNOWS WHERE ROG WOULD GO NOW HE'S BROKE IT'S YOU
UH YEAH
SO ARE YOU GOING TO HELP US FIND HIM?
UM.. WHAT FOR?
CIG?! HE WAS YOUR BEST FRIEND! DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW HE'S BEEN?
WELL..YEAH..I SUPPOSE. I'LL HAVE TO FINISH PAINTING FIRST THOUGH. AND LIKE I SAID - THAT BLOKE'S COMING ROUND THIS AFTERNOON, SO..
OK
WELL, NO PROBLEM. IT STAYS LIGHT FOREVER THESE DAYS, LOUISE?
YOU WANT TO STICK AROUND?
WELL, I HAVEN'T GOT ANY-THING ELSE TO DO SO -YEAH! YEAH, WHY NOT? WE'LL GIVE YOU A HAND ROUND HERE
HEY THANKS!

LOUISE! I'M TELLING YOU, THOSE WERE THE ONLY PLACES I CAN THINK OF THAT HE'D BE
C'MON YOU GUYS WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR AGES NOW
YEAH
CAN'T WE GET SOMETHING TO EAT? I'M STARVING
ME TOO
WONDERFUL...A MUTINY
I DON'T GET IT. WHO CARES WHERE ROGER BOOTHE IS? CAN YOU TELL ME WAI I'M FOLLOWING THIS LOT?
BECAUSE YOU'RE A BITTER ADOLESCENT WHO RESENTS HIS PARENTS AND HAS NOTHING BETTER TO DO WITH HIS FRIDAY NIGHTS
OH REALLY? SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU?
HIS GIRL-FRIEND
SO FAR
I'VE EXHAUSTED EVERY HANG OUT I CAN THINK OF... I THINK WE MAY BE CHASING A GHOST
YOU SURE THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE?
UH-HUH
THIS LOOK LIKE A GHOST TO YOU?
LOOK: THERE'S ONE MORE PLACE; THE BARN DOWN BEHIND THE SCHOOL. WE USED TO HIDE THERE WHEN WE WERE SMALL
WE CAN CUT ACROSS TO IT DOWN HERE
WATCH YOUR STEP THOUGH. IT'S A NASTY DROP
CHRIST I HAVEN'T BEEN THE OLD BARN IN YEARS BET IT'S PRETTY SPOOKY AT NIGHT
AAAAAUUU!!!
HEY EVERYONE!
WHERE'S LOUISE?

AAAAAAA
THUD!
STAY AWAY FROM HIM FOSTER
E. ELAINE?!
ELAINE I..IS THAT YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TALK-ING ABOUT?
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALK-ING ABOUT YOU SCHEMING COW JUST STAY AWAY FROM HIM!
:KAFF!: GETTOFF! ELAINE! MY CHEST! :
I SAW YOU LEANING ALL OVER HIM.. FLIRTING
OH FOR GODS SAKE!! JUST GROW UP!!
IS THIS ABOUT WHAT I TOLD RACHEL? WELL YOU CAN FOR-GET IT- IT'S A LIE. AND ANY-WAY, HE'S MUCH TOO SHORT! EVEN I'M TALLER THAN HE IS!
WHAT'S SO BLOODY FUNNY? WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?
:HAHAHUH: B..BECAUSE I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT KARL!
W..WELL NEITHER WAS I
I WASN'T!
TELL HIM AND DIE
AHAHAHAHAH

HEY EVERYONE!
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?
LOOKING FOR YOU LOT! LOOK WHO I FOUND
HI ELAINE. BY THE WAY LOUISE, CIG'S STILL LOOKING FOR YOU ROUND THE BACK OF THE SCHOOL.
ROB, YOU'D BETTER..
HEY CIG! WE'VE FOUND HER!!
GO AND TELL HIM
SHIT. I HOPE HE ISN'T ANGRY
I DON'T KNOW. HE CAN TAKE THESE THINGS PRETTY SERIOUSLY
SEIZE HER.
SEIZE HOPELESS BINT WHO GET LOST LIKE TWO YEAR OLD IN FOREST
I SEES HER ALRIGHT ALREADY
AUAGH! GERROFF!
OKAY LISTEN EVERYONE. LOUISE? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'RE GOING TO FIND BOOTHE AND IT'S GETTING LATE. THERE IS ONE OTHER REASON I ASKED THE REST OF YOU ALONG THOUGH
THORPE'S OFFERING EACH OF YOU A JOB - IF YOU WANT IT. IT'S 100 QUID A WEEK. BUT HE WANTS THE DEN FINISHED BY AUGUST 3RD THAT ONLY GIVES US A MONTH
WHY US? WHY DOESN'T HE JUST EMPLOY SOME OF HIS LACKIES TO DO IT?
BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WITH COUNCIL PERMISSION. THEY'LL BE CHECKING UP ON US, NO DOUBT.
HEY! I'VE JUST THOUGHT! MAYBE THORPE'S USING THE DEN AS A CHEAP PR. EXERCISE
QUICK THINKING ROBERT. HOW WAS MARS?
ANYWAY, I'VE GOT TO TAKE NAMES OF ANYONE INTERESTED
TRACY?
BRIAN?
YOU IN?
W-ELL, I RECKON WE'D HAVE TO THI..
WE'RE IN
THANK YOU BRIAN
LOUISE?
NOT ME. I'M GOING TO FRANCE TOMORROW
WHAT?! YOU CAN'T!!
SORRY?
OH FOR GOD'S SAKES

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ALL THIS UP! AND THEN YOU JUST COME OUT WITH - 'OH, I'M GOING TO FRANCE TOMORROW!'
WELL? I'M NOT STOPPING YOU LOOKING AM I?
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO FIND BOOTHE!
OH AND YOU DIDN'T?
WELL, YEAH, BUT
LOOK YOU HEARD WHAT CIG SAID IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'RE GOING TO FIND HIM
SO YOU'RE GIVING UP
NO! I'M JUST..
GIVING UP
BOG OFF!!
YOU BOG OFF!!
IT'S ALL REALLY MATURE STUFF, ISN'T IT?
ABSOLUTELY
ANYONE ELSE NEED TO SIGN?
AND SO...
UH, KARL? YOU STILL INTERESTED?
YOU BET I AM! HOLD STILL!
FINALLY
CIG, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING? D'YOU THINK THERE'S ANY CHANCE WE'LL FIND BOOTHE?
TRUTH?
YEAH
NO.
I DON'T THINK SO
OK, IS THAT EVERYONE'S NAMES NOW?
YEAH YEAH
AND REMEMBER, KEEP THIS QUIET
C'MON LET'S GO AND EAT
ANYONE HAVE ANY QUE..
YOU LUCKY SWINE
HUH?

SO, YOU TWO LOVEBIRDS, YOU THINK THORPE'S TAKING US FOR A RIDE? THINK WE SHOULD STICK HIM FOR MORE MONEY?
'LOVEBIRDS'?
WHAT D'YOU MEAN 'LOVEBIRDS'?!
ME AND HIM? HAH!
HE'D HAVE TO GROW A COUPLE OF METRES.
YEAH? WELL YOU'D HAVE TO CHANGE SEX. I ONLY GO OUT WITH GIRLS
DWARF
BEAKNOSE
LOOK! WE ARE NOT LOVEBIRDS OKAY??!
AND WHO SAID I WAS TALKING TO YOU?

GALLERY

NO RIDERS

pen and ink illustration

Cerebus pencilled and inked
and lettering by Dave Sim
Illustration by Brad W. Foster

pen and ink
and mechanical
tone on illustration
paper 7½ X 10¼

minimum bid:
$125

COMIC BOOK LEGAL
DEFENSE FUND

bidding closes on May 1, 1993
5 P.M. EST.

The remaining 'jam' pieces to benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (Chester Brown, Rick Veitch, Scott Beaderstadt/Paul Fricke and Michael T. Gilbert) and the Mick 'n' Keef piece are nearing completion. Thank you for your patience.

GALLERY

"NON-REGULATION HELMETS"
"INDECENT EXPOSURE"
HALLUCINOGENETIC EMISSIONS FROM TASTY GANK

DAVE WITH JEFF YANDORA & "THE PHANTOM CREW", PHANTOM OF THE ATTIC, PITTSBURGH

DAVE &PERY PLUSH OF ZANADU COMICS, SEATTLE